



Mishawaka Communicator



Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life, and inspiring pride in our community.

Mishawaka, Indiana

Jeff Rea, Mayor

March 2009

A Letter from Mayor Jeff Rea

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It is always a great privilege to highlight what we think the history books will remember most of the past year and 2008 is no exception! Perhaps the most anticipated and long awaited accomplishment was the opening of the Main Street Underpass. Some say it had been talked about for 70+ years. I am not sure about that, but I do know that for the past 20 years it has been one of our top transportation priorities. At the time of this writing it is only about half finished, but traffic is moving under the railroad

for the first time and we are anticipating a mid-summer completion for the project. Early in 2008 the north bank of the Mishawaka Riverwalk moved one step closer to completing the three mile loop. The Riverwalk Cable Stayed Bridge was opened in late November.

This past year, Mishawaka set a new record for construction permits, surpassing the previous record set in 2007 by 200 million dollars. Also in 2008 Mishawaka Utilities completed installation of 90% of the fiber optic net-

work in Mishawaka. This network will extend St. Joseph Valley Metronet's Fiber Optic Network into parts of Mishawaka and will provide a myriad of services to our citizens, commercial accounts and industrial customers which are unavailable to them today. More information on all of these projects and more can be found online at our website www.mishawakacity.com/ in the 2009 State of the City.

Highlights of City Services in 2008

Our country is experiencing a time of great uncertainty, one like we have not seen during our lifetime. The current economic crisis is impacting our citizens, our businesses, and our City government. Difficult days lie ahead as many predict we are in the very early stages of this current crisis.

As we attempt to navigate these difficult economic times, cities and towns will be an important part of the nationwide economic recovery. Cities and towns are the economic engines that drive the US economy. Sixty-five percent of our nation's population live in our cities. Cities are the home of 7 out of 10 American jobs. I believe the decisions we have all

made over the past 5 years have prepared Mishawaka to help lead this area out of the current crisis.

Mishawaka will continue to be looked at as the example other communities model themselves after, for the efficient and effective delivery of services, for the responsible use of the tax dollars our citizens have entrusted us with, and for the outstanding customer service we provide our citizens. I think we do it all pretty well, and I am proud of the things we have accomplished. I said well, but we are not great yet, and over the next 10 months I will propose the most comprehensive, sweeping changes our city government has ever seen. Business as usual will

not work. Tough economic times and declining revenues demand difficult decisions be made and that we change the way we do our business. My administrative team is ready to do that, but we must have the cooperation of everyone.

In this year's State of the City we highlighted some of the exceptional city services that our employees provide. While we have not included an all encompassing list, we have tried to touch on those which have the biggest impact on our neighborhoods and community. One of the most important contractual services provided to all residents is our city wide solid waste

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This Month:

State of the City Recap

Next Month:

Customer Service Survey

All past issues of the Communicator are available at www.mishawakacity.com

Trash Questions?
Call the Street Department
258-1660

United States[®]
Census
2010

It's Coming! The 2010 Census is only a little over one year away! Over the course of the next year in Communicator Articles we will periodically remind you about the 2010 Census, how important it is to participate, and who you can contact if you have questions. So whenever you see the graphic of the hands below we would like you to think about the 2010 Census. Remember, it's in your hands!



Around the Town

March:

6th - "Dances for a Festive Night"

A dance concert beginning at 7:30p.m. presented by Ruby Jazayre in the auditorium at the Battell Center. For ticket and production information please contact the Battell Center Main Office at: 258-1667

14th - Mother / Son Dance 7-9:00p.m.

In the gym of the Battell Center. For ticket information please call the Mishawaka Parks Department at: 258-1664

28th - Live-a-Difference Day

For more information visit www.makeadifferencemichiana.org/differenceday.asp

There are a number of other events happening throughout March at the Battell Center. For a detailed list contact the Battell Center Office at 258-1667

See the complete city calendar on the web at: MishawakaCity.com

Public Safety

Our 2008 crime statistics show that our clean and safe neighborhood reputation is well deserved, which we believe is due to our public safety officials commitment to a proactive approach toward crime and fire prevention. However, no crime is ever acceptable and it is our hope that our citizens never fall victim to crime or fire and that is why our police officers and firefighters spend countless hours in our schools educating our youth and informing the public throughout our community in order to help prevent crime and fires before they start.

Police, Fire and EMS personnel all use Premier Mobile Date Computing (PMDC). The PMDC allows our city's First Responders to have at their fingertips all of the dis-

patch information that has been entered into the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system by the dispatcher. This information includes: locations and types of an incidents, as well as any other information that has been entered about that incident, along with any history pertaining to a location that someone may be dispatched to.

Crime statistics for 2008 show that overall homicides, rape, larceny, assaults, auto theft and arson were all down compared to the ten year average. There was a increase burglaries in 2008.

Run volume for the fire department, including fire and medical incidents increased slightly in the year 2008 to 5,460 from its 2007 level of 5,382. This 1.5% increase can be attributed to

the City's continued growth and aging population. Medical runs still make up the vast majority of calls. Medical runs made up 77% of our run total for 2008.

In 2008 the Fire Department responded to 33 commercial fires, 42 residential fires, 7 garage fires, and 11 apartment complex fires. Although both residential and commercial fire runs were up in 2008, no lives were lost due to fire. The fact that fire calls were up is an important reminder that everyone remains vigilant regarding fire prevention. Future issues of the Communicator will be dedicated to providing additional information and resources on fire prevention.

All of these statistics are

Highlights of City Services in 2008 (Continued)

collection. In 2008 our five-year contract was renewed with BFI/Allied Waste Services who submitted the lowest bid. Beginning January 1st 2009 a monthly charge of \$12.91 or \$9.53 senior rate for solid waste collection services began appearing on your Mishawaka Utilities monthly bill. This cost includes an administrative fee of one dollar each month added to each bill to offset the costs for collection, vacant home and vacation services.

In an effort to further elevate the quality of life in Mishawaka's neighborhoods, the Department of Code Enforcement has developed a yearly initiative to work together as a team to make a noticeable impact on the overall appearance of one neighborhood. In 2008 the Milburn Boulevard area was chosen because it is largely residential, densely populated and its boundaries are clearly defined. Code officers initiated 666 public nuisance type cases with 637 being closed, a 96% completion rate. Code Officers opened a total of 97 cases on substandard structures and closed 65 of them which reflect a 67% completion rate.

In 2008 the Department worked with willing sellers to acquire the five properties located at the northwest corner of East Third Street and South Merrifield Avenue. The 854 E. Third Street site was a vacant commercial/ retail property that had been denied a rezoning request, and was a blight on the surrounding neighborhood. All five properties at this corner were demolished in December, with grading and re-seeding anticipated for Spring 2009. The cleared lots will be used for future First Time Homebuyer Program lots, but in the near future will be utilized as a staging area for local infrastructure improvements.

In 2008 the City continued the first project in the Milburn Boulevard Area Sewer Improvements, which included the major 60" storm sewer outlet from south of the Norfolk Southern Railroad to the St. Joseph River.

2008 will be remembered for a number of significant reasons and we are grateful to all of our employees for the service they provide to our citizens each and every day. As we look to 2009 and the challenges ahead of us, we will change the way we do our business, but we will still deliver the great services that our citizens deserve and respect.

even more impressive when you consider the decrease in the number of incidents relative to the continued growth of the City in that same time. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the City's population grew by 4.9% from 2000 to 2006. Based on building permit data, the City has also added hundreds of millions of dollars of commercial development during the same timeframe!

In 2008 our public services personnel increased efficiencies by utilizing Mobile Data Terminals. These terminals allowed Mishawaka's First Responders to increase both their capability and competency when on location by providing them information that can keep both officers and the public safe.